



SCHOOL
NUTRITION TEAM

School Nutrition News

Fall 2021 Vol 14 Issue No 1

Infants and Preschoolers in Child Nutrition Programs

Are you serving 3K and/or 4K students? Please note that if 3K and 4K students are being served in the classroom, they are not considered [Co-Mingled](#) and must be served the [Infant and Preschool Meal Pattern](#) unless your school food authority (SFA) has an approved [Meal Pattern Flexibility Request](#) that allows one meal pattern for all ages/grade groups. Preschool students can be included in your one meal pattern waiver request; however, justification for approval must be related to procurement or availability issues, unresolvable food safety concerns, or plans to support access to nutritious meals while minimizing potential exposure to COVID-19.

Please contact [Brittany Zerbe](#) or [Tanya Kirtz](#) if you have questions or concerns.

School Nutrition Superhero of the Month Nominations

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) School Nutrition Team (SNT) has featured one school food service “superhero” each month on our Facebook page who is doing an excellent job in their role. We know that running a school food service operation is no easy feat and we cannot thank you all enough for your hard work serving meals to our Wisconsin students. If you know someone who would be an excellent School Nutrition Superhero of the Month, please let us know by sending an email to SNPsocialmedia@dpi.wi.gov with your nomination.

FEATURED STORIES

[Seamless Summer Option](#)

[Great Beginnings
Academy](#)

[Farm to School Updates](#)

[USDA Foods](#)

[GOALS Updates](#)

[Fresh Fruit and Vegetable
Program in Wisconsin](#)

[Small Victories 2021
Training](#)

[SNACS Updates](#)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

OCTOBER 11-15,
2021
[National School Lunch Week](#)

OCTOBER 2021
[National Farm to School
\(F2S\) Month](#)

JANUARY 17-21,
2021
[Around the World in 80
Trays](#)

USDA Guidance Memo Summaries



[SP 10-2021: Questions and Answers Regarding Child Nutrition Program Oversight, Administration, and Reporting During COVID-19 \(April 19, 2021\)](#)

This memorandum includes questions and answers intended to provide clarifications to State agencies (SAs) and Program operators regarding the oversight and administration of the Child Nutrition Programs. These questions and answers are a compilation of technical assistance that FNS has provided this year concerning this fiscal year (FY) and school year (SY) 2020-21.

[SP 12-2021: Department of Education Information on the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program \(May 19, 2021\)](#)

This memorandum provides information developed by the Department of Education that informs schools about the Federal Communication Commission's Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB).

[SP 13-2021: FY 2021 NSLP Equipment Assistance Grants for SFAs \(June 1, 2021\)](#)

This memorandum announces \$30 million provided by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, to SAs to competitively award equipment assistance grants to eligible school food authorities (SFAs) participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

[SP 14-2021: Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program: Allocation of Funds for Fiscal Year 2022 \(June 1, 2021\)](#)

This memorandum provides the total funding amount available to FNS to distribute to SAs, which is \$233.1 million for FY 2022.

[COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #98: Nationwide Waiver of Local School Wellness Policy Triennial Assessments in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs \(June 11, 2021\)](#)

This memorandum waives the requirement for local educational agencies (LEAs) to conduct a triennial assessment of their local wellness policies by June 30, 2021; allowing them to conduct their assessment by June 30, 2022 instead. The Wisconsin DPI **has not elected this waiver and therefore will not participate in this waiver**. If you have questions regarding the Local School Wellness Policy Triennial Assessment, visit the [Local Wellness Policy](#) webpage or contact dpifns@dpi.wi.gov.

[SP 15-2021: Questions and Answers for Child Nutrition Program Operations in School Year 2021-22 \(June 11, 2021\)](#)

This memorandum provides questions and answers related to the nationwide waivers released for SY 2021-22. Of note, meals served through the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) will be reimbursed at the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) rate beginning July 1, 2021. SFAs operating SSO may continue to claim meals at the SFSP rate through June 30, 2022.

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Seamless Summer Option Updates

Wisconsin schools are providing free meals to ALL students through the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) this school year! These free meals provide tremendous benefits to children and their families. As your School Food Authority (SFA) operates the SSO, please be reminded of the following:

1. If your SFA provides meals to a school or childcare center that is not affiliated with your SFA, your SFA and the school or childcare center must complete a [SSO Sponsor-Site Agreement](#) and return it to SSO@dpi.wi.gov. If you have not completed this agreement, please do so as soon as possible.
2. You may make changes to your SY 2021-22 Program Operations Application (SSO Application) at any point during the school year. If you would like to make changes, please email SSO@dpi.wi.gov.
3. Are you ready to submit your SSO claim? If so, the [SSO Claiming Manual](#) and [SSO Claiming Webcast](#) can help you with this process.
4. Need a refresher on SSO program requirements or looking to train new staff? Check out the [SSO E-Learning Course](#)!

If you have any questions about operating the SSO, please contact the SSO Specialists at SSO@dpi.wi.gov.

Wisconsin schools are providing free meals to ALL students through the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) this school year!

Great Beginnings Academy

Great Beginnings Academy is a free training opportunity intended for managers or directors new to their positions administering USDA School Meals Programs. The DPI SNT is offering this live, virtual training series on Wednesday afternoons in October using the Microsoft Teams platform. This is the same technology we used to for the SNSDC 2021 virtual classes. If you qualify as a newly hired Director/Manager and would like to join, please complete the [Great Beginnings Academy Registration Form](#).



Farm to School Updates

The DPI SNT is excited to announce that we have received a USDA Farm to School Grant. The theme of our grant is the “Lifecycle of Farm to School” with a goal to help schools across Wisconsin build or expand school garden programs and connect districts with local farmers. Keep your eyes peeled for more information about how your school can get involved in Farm to School.

Another exciting announcement for Wisconsin Farm to School is that the 2019 USDA Farm to School Census Results are in. The [USDA Farm to School Census](#) surveys all school food authorities (SFAs) participating in the National School Lunch Program about their Farm to School activities. The 2019 data shows 70.2% of Wisconsin SFAs that completed the Census engage in F2S, reaching at least 590,076 Wisconsin students.

The DPI SNT is excited to announce that we have received a USDA Farm to School Grant.

USDA Foods

Wisconsin USDA Foods Contract Specialists will hold the USDA Foods Direct Diversion Processing Food Show and Procurement Training on Tuesday, November 2. This training and food show is the day before the Wisconsin School Nutrition Association (SNA) fall conference. The food show is an opportunity for USDA Foods processors and food brokers to taste test USDA Foods products for SY 2022-23. The events will be held at the Central Wisconsin Convention and Expo Center in Rothschild, Wisconsin. Watch for event updates and registration on the [SNA Events Webpage](#).



GOALS Recipients

Congratulations to the following people who have recently earned their GOALS Certificate:

- Jill Frank, Chilton School District
- Dawn Roland, Wausau School District



Small Victories Fall Training: Back to Basics

This self-paced, interactive training is intended for school food service employees who want to learn about the basics of the breakfast and lunch meal patterns and how to credit food items.



Small Victories will also offer another self-paced training focusing on the basics of the Afterschool Snacks Program this fall. A **live event** will be offered in **November** for participants! Please visit the [Small Victories Training Webpage](#) for more information!

New! Fluid Milk Substitute Approval Form

School Food Authorities (SFAs) may offer students a fluid milk substitute that is nutritionally equivalent to cow's milk *without* a signed medical statement from the child's health care team. SFAs must request approval from the DPI School Nutrition Team (SNT) to ensure the milk substitute meets nutritional guidelines.

The SNT has created a [List of Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes](#) to help you choose an eligible product. Once you've chosen a product, please complete and submit the [Fluid Milk Substitute Approval Form](#). Please note that lactose-free cow's milk does not need prior approval, as it is already an approved milk type in the child nutrition programs.

For more information or to access the contact information of the SNT's special dietary needs specialists, visit our [Special Dietary Needs](#) webpage.

SNACS Updates

Is your SFA scheduled for an Administrative Review (AR) this year? You will need access to our School Nutrition Accountability Software (SNACS)! After your AR has been scheduled, visit the [SNACS Webpage](#) for instructions on requesting access to SNACS. If you have questions about SNACS, please contact DPISNACSSupport@dpi.wi.gov.



SNT Member Updates

Congratulations to...

Jessica Oele and husband who welcomed a healthy baby girl on July 3rd!

Farewell and Best Wishes to...

Lauren Troxtel, Nutrition Program Consultant, who left our team in April for a new job working with the American Red Cross in Georgia!

Welcome to...

Alyssa Flores, Nutrition Program Consultant

Favorite School Meal: Chicken enchiladas

Hobbies & Interests: Spending time with family and friends, cooking, and baking

Favorite Part of your job with SNT: Collaborating with such an incredible team!



Mary Augustine, Nutrition Program Consultant

Favorite School Meal: Fold over pizza slices

Hobbies & Interests: Gardening, hiking, cooking

Favorite Part of your job with SNT: De-mystifying program, policy, and contract requirements for school staff.



Evangeline (Angie) Swanson, Operations Program Associate

Favorite School Meal: Stuffed Shells

Hobbies and Interests: Cooking, gardening, sewing, exploring parks with my family, and listening to audiobooks

Favorite Part of your job with SNT: Talking to people from all over the State.



SNSDC News

Thank you to the hundreds of school nutrition professionals who attended our virtual live School Nutrition Skills Development Courses (SNSDC) this summer. Our team appreciated your participation and agreed with the feedback that continuing to provide virtual training opportunities is beneficial.



Recorded videos featured on our [SNSDC Webpage](#) that were presented for summer training in 2020 will be removed on October 31, 2021. Please plan accordingly if you wish to view these full-length resources.

AmeriCorps Program of the Year

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's AmeriCorps Farm to School Program was recently named Program of the Year at the 2021 Governor's Service Awards.

The Governor's Service Awards are presented to exceptional programs, volunteers, and service members who work to change impending community disadvantages. Those presented with awards were honored for making superlative contributions to solve said hardships. Go to the [AmeriCorps Webpage](#) to watch the video of the award presentation and learn more.



Maddie Smith (Oregon School District AmeriCorps F2S member), Kara Ignasiak (DPI AmeriCorps F2S Nutrition Education Consultant), and Megan Wise (former AC F2S member for Crawford County UW-Extension) accepting the award.

Verification

The verification process begins around October 1. Be sure to use the correct sampling method for your LEA and select the correct number of applications to meet the sampling size requirement.

The DPI SNT has resources to assist in understanding the process of Verification. The [Overview of Free, Reduced and Verification](#) webcast was created to give new staff members a brief overview of the meal eligibility and verification process. There are also webcasts about the [Verification Process](#) and [Submitting the Verification Collection Report](#). You may also utilize the [Determining Free and Reduced Price Eligibility and Verification Processes In A Nutshell](#) for reference.

On the Verification webpage, the [Verification Forms Packet](#) provides examples of potential forms households can use. It includes sampling method worksheets, template letters, a tracker form and templates for communication. To help SFAs with tracking all the verification activities, the [Verification Tracker Form](#) was created. The SNT strongly encourages the use of this form for verifying each application.

Remember to complete the verification process by November 15. The Verification Collection Report (VCR) must be completed by February 1. It is encouraged to print a hard copy and complete it with the required data before submitting the report on-line. DO NOT report Medicaid - Reduced (Z code) in the VCR at all. Medicaid-reduced will be collected and reported to USDA through an alternate mechanism since the VCR has not been updated by USDA to reflect this match.

2021-22 Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)

This school year, elementary students in more than 235 Wisconsin schools will enjoy fresh fruit and vegetable snacks at least two days per week! FFVP funding provides schools the opportunity to offer students unique produce that they may not have been able to try elsewhere. Last school year, Wisconsin students snacked on gooseberries, sweet potato sticks, pea pods, and Wisconsin-grown apples, among many other local fruits and vegetables. One school reports, “parents have said that their child is asking to try new veggies when they go to the grocery store.” Another said, “One of our teachers used blackberries to test the five senses, smelling them, tasting them, looking at them, touching them, and listening to the crunch when they bit into them.” Schools that operate the FFVP consistently demonstrate the program’s positive effects on nutrition and wellness throughout the school.

The Wisconsin [FFVP Webpage](#) includes information about the program, eligibility, requirements, and helpful resources for schools participating in the program. Here you will also find current information on how to serve the FFVP to virtual students.

Grant funds from USDA make the FFVP possible nationwide. We are happy to announce that all eligible Wisconsin schools that applied for the FFVP were awarded funding for the 2021-22 school year. If your school did not apply, please consider applying next school year. FFVP grant application information for the 2022-23 school year will be available in early 2022.



New Procurement Webcasts

The SNT released four new procurement webcasts to provide SFA staff with a basic understanding of the procurement process, general procurement standards, and allowable purchasing methods. Visit the [SNT Procurement Webcast](#) page to view training videos at your convenience. If you are having trouble locating the page or resource, please email DPISNUSDAFOODS@dpi.wi.gov.



USDA Guidance (cont'd)

[SP 16-2021: Previously Issued Questions and Answers Relating to Operation of the Child Nutrition Programs: Updated for School Year 2021-2022 \(July 14, 2021\)](#)

This memorandum provides questions and answers intended to provide clarification to SAs and Program operators of the Child Nutrition Programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), NSLP Seamless Summer Option (SSO), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), during SY 2021-22. These questions and answers were previously issued in calendar year 2020 and have been updated for application to SY 2021-22.

[SP 17-2021: COVID-19 Waiver Requests Submitted Prior to December 31, 2020 \(July 14, 2021\)](#)

This memorandum provides clarification that any individual SAs waiver requests submitted to FNS that were not denied or approved from the beginning of the COVID-19 public health emergency through December 31, 2020, are now denied. SAs that have continued interest in requesting individual waivers may re-submit waiver requests to the appropriate FNS Regional office.

[SP 18-2021: Community Eligibility Provision Operations during School Year 2021-2022: Questions and Answers \(July 22, 2021\)](#)

This memorandum provides clarification on questions related to the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) during the public health emergency due to COVID-19. It applies to SAs administering and local organizations operating the NSLP, SBP, and NSLP SSO.

[SP 19-2021: Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Operations for SY 2021-2022 during COVID-19 \(August 9, 2021\)](#)

This memorandum includes questions and answers intended to provide clarification on the operation of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) during implementation of alternative Child Nutrition Program operations throughout school year SY 2021-22 due to the continued novel coronavirus (COVID-19) public health emergency. These questions and answers were previously issued and have been updated for application to SY 2021-22.

[SP 20-2021: Child Nutrition Emergency Operational Costs Reimbursement Programs: Q&As #3 \(August 11, 2021\)](#)

This memorandum provides further clarification on questions and answers related to the Child Nutrition Emergency Operational Costs Reimbursement Programs. It applies to SAs administering the NSLP, SBP, and CACFP. This document details further instructions and administrative procedures for participation in the reimbursement program, which makes funding available via SAs to program operators for the purposes of covering emergency operating costs incurred during the public health emergency.

About Us

School Nutrition News is published three times per year by the Department of Public Instruction.



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October 2021 Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

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